



# OEC

# NEWS

Summer 2004



## Oregon Employer Council Newsletter

### President's Message

What an accomplishment we have been able to achieve! We have survived for nearly 30 years as an organization that is completely voluntary, without compensation of any kind, except for the satisfaction of a job well done.

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#### Thank you members: past, present, and future!

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We have worked without a lot of fanfare or recognition. We continue to do this for all of Oregon's employers, yet most of them don't know who we are. Our efforts have made the Oregon workforce system better, even if most wouldn't know our name or how we have contributed.

We are the Oregon Employer Council. Our partners are many, and the 23 local councils around the state include many of them as members. As well, many OEC members sit at partners' tables discussing how to continue the advancement of workforce development.

Nationally, we are at a very interesting time. We are at the brink of experiencing the largest segment of our population retiring out of the workforce over the next 10-15 years. We are at a slower pace of immigrating workers into the United States. And, we are at the beginning of a hopefully long recovery in our economy. We are seeing a need to do more, with fewer human resources that require more skills than ever before.

The same can be said for OEC. As our organization matures and our members retire to do other things, we are asked to do more with less. We will continue to rise to that challenge, but it would be much easier if we had more help.

I am asking you to come to our table to discuss the continuing development of the workforce system in Oregon.

Employers benefit by having a workforce that is trained in the skills business requires, ready to use those skills

when needed, and willing to work at a wage that is beneficial to all.

Employees benefit by gaining the skills that are required and needed most by employers, having listed openings in locations that are accessible to them when they are ready to search, and a funding stream to assist them when they are unemployed.

The system that has evolved in the state of Oregon is the direct result of the participation of the members of the Oregon Employer Council, discussing the needs, wants, and desires of the business community with the providers and partners responsible for these services.

Oregon is unique in the United States for our innovative approaches to solving the many challenges of workforce development. We are on the leading edge and many states use our models and envy our passion and willingness to fund the programs and initiatives to meet the challenges.

As the Oregon Employment Department changes its service delivery we need to continue to provide real-world feedback. As our lawmakers meet to pass legislation that impacts business, we need to involve ourselves to speak out for those things that truly help us and to object to those that don't. With the various partners that are involved in workforce development, we need to ensure they hear the voice of the business community as refinements to their programs impact us.

How do we rise to these challenges with the limited time we have in our "paying" jobs? I invite you to seek out those that have an interest in the workforce, those that benefit from the efforts of our labor, and those that will benefit in the future.



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Invite them to the table, involve them in the discussions, and ask them to participate in our activities and efforts. We, they, and everyone else will benefit.



## **iMatchSkills, UI Centers The Employment Department Gets A New Look**

The past six months have seen major changes in the Employment Department. You've heard that these changes were coming—now they're here! Our employees have been inundated over the past few months with new technology, new locations, new procedures. It's frightening, but it's exciting, too. Everyone has risen to the challenge—for changes as far-reaching as these, things have gone remarkably smoothly.

### **iMatchSkills:**

Remember iMatchSkills? We demonstrated it at last year's meeting in Newport; some of you have seen it in your local OEC meetings. To refresh your memory, iMS is a new online tool to match job seekers with employers by using skill sets. The old system, OJSS, matched based on job title, a procedure that severely limited matches and reduced our effectiveness in finding the right worker for the job. iMS matches based on skill sets, giving employers the ability to target the type of worker they need. Employers will be able to set up and manage personalized accounts; list, modify and close job openings; view resumes; match candidates by skills, occupations, certifications, or all three; view applicant skills; contact candidates directly; or continue to use our staff's assistance to screen and match. It's a big step toward accomplishing our mission to refer only the best-qualified applicants.

On April 12, we closed down our old job-matching system and powered up iMS. The program is not yet available to the public on the web; OED staff continue to learn the details and work out the bugs. During June, we'll be making it available on computers in lobbies at four field offices (Ontario, Bend, Hillsboro and Astoria). When we're confident that the pilots are successful, we'll roll out the system in all the lobbies. By the end of the summer, iMS will be available on the

web for you to access from your home or office, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

### **UI Centers**

The second major project is withdrawing Unemployment Insurance activities from the local field offices and concentrating them in three UI Centers. The three centers are located in Eugene, Milwaukee and Bend. As you recall, the Centers will allow us to improve services in many ways: telephone claims-taking provides immediate person-to-person service for claimants; claims filing is turned around immediately, leading to few or no backlogs; staff training is cheaper and more efficient, providing consistency in service for all customers; and employers will have a direct line into the Centers to provide immediate access to information. Once the Centers are set up, field office staff will direct all UI questions to Center staff. Field office staff can then focus on services to employers: providing the workforce you need to make your business successful.



The first Center to come online is Eugene. On July, staff will begin moving into the new space on Country Club Road; by August 15, staff from all the feeder offices will be housed there. By January 1, the site in Milwaukee, serving the Portland metropolitan area and the northwest, will be up and running. And on July 1, 2005, the Bend office will be operational.

### **OED Employees**

All this means major adjustment for OED employees, and they've come through like the outstanding individuals they are. Many have had to change worksites; a good number will need to move themselves and their families to new communities. They're learning new technologies, new ways of doing things, new skills. Please be patient with us while we undergo our changes—I can guarantee that service will not suffer while we change and you'll like what you see when we're done. And please let us know what we can do to perfect our new look: the members of the Oregon Employer Councils across the state are our best advisors. Keep an eye on us—we just keep getting better!



# 2004

## Upcoming Dates...

- June 30..... **Fiscal year-end**
- August 1..... **Year-end financial reports due**
- August 17..... **3rd quarter board meeting conference call (9 a.m.)**
- September 17..... **Award nominations due**
- October 18 - 20..... **Annual state conference for business - *A World Of Difference***  
Embassy Suites Washington Square, Beaverton

[www.WorkingInOregon.org/OEC](http://www.WorkingInOregon.org/OEC)



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